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Postmodern
Narrative
Theory

Mark Currie



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First published 1998 by
MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-68779-6 ISBN 978-1-349-26620-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-26620-3

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and
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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
07 06 05 04 03 02 01 00 99 98



Published in the United States of America 1998 by
ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC.,
Scholarly and Reference Division
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

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General Editor's Preface

Transitions: *transition-em*, n. of action. 1. A passing or passage from one condition, action or (rarely) place, to another. 2. Passage in thought, speech, or writing, from one subject to another. 3. **a.** The passing from one note to another **b.** The passing from one key to another, modulation. 4. The passage from an earlier to a later stage of development or formation ... change from an earlier style to a later; a style of intermediate or mixed character ... the historical passage of language from one well-defined stage to another.

The aim of *Transitions* is to explore passages and movements in critical thought, and in the development of literary and cultural interpretation. This series also seeks to examine the possibilities for reading, analysis and other critical engagements which the very idea of transition makes possible. The writers in this series unfold the movements and modulations of critical thinking over the last generation, from the first emergences of what is now recognised as literary theory. They examine as well how the transitional nature of theoretical and critical thinking is still very much in operation, guaranteed by the hybridity and heterogeneity of the field of literary studies. The authors in the series share the common understanding that, now more than ever, critical thought is both in a state of transition and can best be defined by developing for the student reader an understanding of this protean quality.

This series desires, then, to enable the reader to transform her/his own reading and writing transactions by comprehending past developments. Each book in the series offers a guide to the poetics and politics of interpretative paradigms, schools and bodies of thought, while transforming these, if not into tools or methodologies, then into conduits for directing and channelling thought. As well as transforming the critical past by interpreting it from the perspective of the present day, each study enacts transitional readings of a number of well-known literary texts, all of which are themselves conceivable as

having been transitional texts at the moments of their first appearance. The readings offered in these books seek, through close critical reading and theoretical engagement, to demonstrate certain possibilities in critical thinking to the student reader.

It is hoped that the student will find this series liberating because rigid methodologies are not being put into place. As all the dictionary definitions of the idea of transition above suggest, what is important is the action, the passage: of thought, of analysis, of critical response. Rather than seeking to help you locate yourself in relation to any particular school or discipline, this series aims to put you into action, as readers and writers, travellers between positions, where the movement between poles comes to be seen as of more importance than the locations themselves.

Julian Wolfreys

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Julian Wolfreys for his encouragement and detailed comment during the writing of this book. I am also grateful to the members of the English Department in Dundee University for their support, to the department's students, present and past, who have helped to shape the ideas presented here, and to Gwen Hunter and Ann Bain for their unfailing kindness and help. I would like to thank everyone at Macmillan who has been involved with this book, particularly Margaret Bartley, the commissioning editor. And I am deeply indebted to several others in my real life who put up with me when I was under pressure, for their love and friendship.

MC

Abbreviations

- HD Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902) London: Penguin, 1983.
- JH Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories* (1886) London: Penguin, 1979.